

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Specification

Regarding the objection to the specification, the specification has been amended to include appropriate subheadings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner noted the limitation "connecting means have the same geometry" is a broad limitation that allows flexibility to the interpretation and is not limiting to the entire tongue and groove having the same geometry. The Examiner then noted the interior horizontal lower portion of the groove of Martensson and the interior horizontal upper portion of the tongue are considered to be the connecting means having the same geometry.

In response, claim 1 has been amended to specify "said one and other connecting means are formed by respective panel edges that have the same geometry, and each panel edge has a uniform cross-sectional portion bounded by top and bottom surfaces of the panels and a profiled cross-sectional portion extending from the uniform cross-sectional portion, each profiled portion having the same geometry but inverted with respect to one another". Accordingly, the entire panel edges have the same but inverted geometry, and such panel edges include a uniform cross-sectional portion (typically at outer portion of the otherwise uniform cross-sectional panel) and a profiled cross-section portion.

This enables the advantage discussed in the specification, that being the ability to use the same configuration of a molding or milling machine to form both profiled edges.

Martensson does not disclose edge portions as now set forth in amended claim 1. Moreover, modifying the edge portions of Martensson in an effort to arrive at the claimed connection means would so alter Martensson so that it would no longer function in its intended manner.

Hanning and Pervan likewise re deficient.

Claim 8 has been amended in a manner similar to claim 1, and new claim 16 includes similar limitations respecting the "same geometry".

Withdrawal of the claim rejections is respectfully requested for at least the foregoing reasons.

Other Contentions

The absence in this reply of any comments on the other contentions set forth in the Office Action should not be construed to be an acquiescence therein. Rather, no comment is needed since the rejections should be withdrawn for at least the foregoing reasons.

Also, the other amendments not expressly discussed above are made to bring the claims into a form more acceptable in the U.S. rather than in response to the art rejections.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

By /Don W. Bulson/
Don W. Bulson, Reg. No. 28,192

1621 Euclid Avenue
Nineteenth Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 621-1113

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